



*Office of Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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MAYOR MORRISSEY JOINS PRESIDENT OBAMA IN FIRST-EVER WHITE HOUSE MAKER FAIRE

Event includes briefing with senior Administration officials to discuss support for manufacturing communities.

ROCKFORD, IL – Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey is one of only 20 mayors across the nation, and the only Mayor from Illinois, joining President Barack Obama for the first-ever Maker Faire to be held at the White House on June 18.

Morrissey will also join a policy discussion with senior Obama Administration officials to discuss support for manufacturing communities on economic, infrastructure and community revitalization.

The Mayor will use this event to help boost advanced manufacturing, innovative technology, and the “Maker Movement” in the Rockford community. The manufacturing sector is coming back in America and, in communities like Rockford, remains a source of jobs and economic innovation.

The Rockford area boasts a high concentration of advanced manufacturing employers such as United Technologies, Woodward, and Chrysler doing cutting edge work in the aerospace, automotive, and heavy equipment industries, among others. Rockford's manufacturing workforce is over double the national average, is highly skilled, and is supported by local education partners like Rock Valley College, Rockford University, Northern Illinois University, and the EIGER Lab's TechWorks training program.

One emerging driver of manufacturing innovation is the “Maker Movement”, a

hands-on effort providing access to high-tech tools and new approaches for businesses, entrepreneurs, and students. The Maker Movement includes diverse fields such as electronics and computer science, fashion and consumer goods, digital and performing arts, and local food production and agriculture.

Recognizing the numerous local efforts involving the Maker Movement, last year Morrissey gathered a number of local entities including RPS District 205, Rock Valley College, Discovery Center, City of Rockford, Rockford Area Economic Development Council, EIGERlab, Boone County, The Element, Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning and Rockford Housing Authority to form the Rockford Maker Network, an open and collaborative local partnership of organizations supporting the Maker Movement in the Rockford region.

In May of this year, Mayor Morrissey issued a Mayoral Proclamation declaring May to be "Maker Movement Month" in recognition and celebration of the importance of Rockford's Maker Movement.

Rockford's Maker Network includes numerous efforts such as:

- The innovative partnership with the Rockford Housing Authority and New York-based Etsy to develop a "Craft Entrepreneurship" training program for public housing residents to support entrepreneurship training as a pathway for self-sufficiency. The first group of residents have already graduated from the program and opened their own shops on Etsy's global sales platform (craftentrepreneurship.com). The effort is supported by the local Rockford Etsy Team, which has over 150 area shop owners.
- District 205 is also developing a curriculum with Etsy to support student entrepreneurship and business development, piloting the program with East High School Art teacher Michelle DalPra. Her class is expected to launch a formal Etsy shop this Fall.
- District 205 teacher Tim Bratina is leading the effort for Rockford's first Maker Faire to be held this November at Auburn High School. Bratina has incorporated a student-run aquaponics sustainable agriculture program as a component of his Sociology curriculum at Auburn.
- The local Discovery Center Children's Museum has featured a children's Maker Lab exhibit and on July 28-31 is holding a four-day "Maker Camp" for children ages 7-11.
- The Rockford Area Economic Development Council provided a \$75,000 grant this January to support the Rockford Maker Network and the development of a

Downtown Maker Space in partnership with the City of Rockford, Rockford Public Library, District 205, Rock Valley College, and the EIGER Lab, and other Maker Network Partners.

- Architecture Makerspace at the Regional Center for Planning & Design is a program to introduce Rockford-area high school students to the field of architectural design, civil engineering and related fields of study.
- The Rockford Public Library will host a robotics lab in mid-July supported by the RAEDC grant and organized by District 205 Academy Coach Chris Magee and utilizing local engineers as instructors.
- The Rockford City Market supports numerous small business maker-sellers each Friday during the summer. From makers of consumer goods to local food growers, the City Market has been extremely successful supporting those small businesses as well as the resurgence of Rockford's downtown with attendance growing each year of the market and an average over 7,000 in attendance each week so far this year.
- The Rockford area has numerous successful local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) partnerships, craft brewing companies, and gardening and agricultural education partnerships. One of those CSA's, Angelic Organics, is supporting education, training, and internships for local public housing residents.
- Local filmmakers and digital artists are creating high-quality, original content like Pablo Korona's *"Our City Our Story"* series continuing our community's tradition of creative artists.
- Rockford Boylan High School engineering students were featured in national media coverage for their efforts utilizing advanced 3D printing technologies to build prosthetic hands for local children.

Morrissey's commitment to growing manufacturing and the Maker Movement in Rockford has caught the attention of the Obama Administration, which is promoting manufacturing growth, the Maker Movement, and local community revitalization through its policies and resources. On June 18, President Obama will host Morrissey along with other mayors, private sector leaders, educational and non-profit officials and technology entrepreneurs at the first-ever White House Maker Faire.

The day's events will include a policy discussion between Mayor Morrissey and approximately 20 other mayors with senior Administration officials including Jeffrey

Zients, Director of the National Economic Council and Assistant to the President for Economic Policy; John Holdren, Director of the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy; Jay Williams, Assistant Secretary for Commerce for Economic Development; David Agnew, White House Director of Intergovernmental Relations; and Jason Miller, Senior Advisor to the President on Manufacturing.

The invited mayors are part of a group of over 80 mayors nationwide who took part in the “Mayors Maker Challenge”, an effort to recruit innovative mayors to take new actions to boost the Maker Movement in their own communities. This Challenge is led by a national coalition of local officials, the Manufacturing Alliance of Communities (MAC), which seeks to boost national policies and resources to support manufacturing communities.

MAC has issued a new “Maker Mayors Action Report” describing the efforts of mayors and local communities to use the Maker Movement to boost innovation and entrepreneurship in technology and advanced manufacturing in the same way the Internet and cloud computing lowered the barriers to entry for digital startups. Rockford is featured in MAC’s Maker Mayors Action Report for the efforts underway in our community. See www.ManufacturingAlliance.us.

"I'm extremely proud of our community's maker efforts, which are part of our great manufacturing heritage ,” stated Mayor Morrissey. "As I stated in my proclamation last month, from the initial efforts of early settlers, to ongoing investments in advanced manufacturing, to today's growth in craft made goods, our community has benefited from the wealth and prosperity born from the work of local makers. I'm honored to be part of the first ever White House Maker Faire and appreciate President Obama's commitment to this important movement."

For more information on the White House Maker Faire and the National Day of Making, visit www.WhiteHouse.gov/makerfaire and follow #NationOfMakers on Twitter.

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